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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIJING 000546

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/15/2028

TAGS: PREL PHUM CH BM

SUBJECT: MFA: BURMESE AGREE TO MARCH VISIT FOR GAMbari;  
CHINA VIEWS REFERENDUM AS A POSITIVE STEP

REF: A. EAP/CM-EMBASSY EMAIL 02/14/08

1B. BEIJING 522

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.4  
(b/d).

11. (C) The Burmese Government has agreed to receive UN Special Advisor Ibrahim Gambari during the first week of March, MFA Asia Department Deputy Director General Yang Yanyi told PolMinCouns she was instructed to "informally inform" us February 15. China has "worked on" the Burmese Government "time and time again" on this issue, DDG Yang stated, and China believes the international community should encourage Burma to "keep up the positive momentum."

12. (C) DDG Yang said that the Burmese regime's February 9 announcement of a referendum on the constitution and setting elections for 2010 indicated that the Burmese Government is speeding up implementation of the "roadmap" to democracy. Echoing MFA public statements (ref B), DDG Yang stated that the international community should appreciate and support this "step in the right direction" and help create an "enabling environment" for Burma's reform, development and national reconciliation. DDG Yang added that China will maintain a constructive role working with the United States and the international community in seeking a final solution for the situation in Burma.

13. (C) Drawing upon ref A points, PolMinCouns stressed the importance of a Gambari visit to Burma for substantive meetings with all relevant sides as soon as possible. PolMinCouns took issue with Yang's positive assessment of the referendum announcement, noting the regime is not cooperating with the S.Y.G.'s good offices -- it continues to arrest and prosecute political activists, has not started a genuine, time-bound dialogue, and is unreasonably delaying Gambari's mission. In this light, PolMinCouns said, increased pressure on Burmese generals is needed, because they only make concessions when they are under pressure.

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